



NATO Foundation
Defense College

Central Asia November 2017

Samarkand Conference: Building Regional Security in Central Asia

On November 10-11, the city of Samarkand (Uzbekistan) hosted the International Conference on Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia, under the auspices of the United Nations. This high-level forum organized by Uzbekistan has represented a success of the new foreign policy undertaken by the President Mirziyoyev and based on the improvement of regional cooperation in order to solve traditional disputes and tensions among Central Asian republics.

In his opening address, Uzbek President highlighted that the enhancement of the regional cooperation among Central Asian countries can evolve in a mutually beneficial partnership, based on sustainable development and prosperity. In terms of regional security and stability, he stressed that terrorism and radicalism are common threats and challenges affecting all countries of the region, promoting the adherence to the principle of “indivisible security” to fight them.

Under President Mirziyoyev Uzbekistan has undertaken a proactive and constructive regional diplomacy in Central Asia, improving cooperation and intensifying political dialogue with these countries and also achieving several strategic goals. The agreement with Kyrgyzstan to demarcate the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border is one of the most relevant results, which allows to downgrade the instability threats linked to the disputes on the shared border and the status of enclaves, while the Declaration of Strategic Partnership has committed these countries to deepen political dialogue, also to solve the problem of the water management together with other Central Asian republics.

Furthermore, Uzbekistan signed a strategic partnership also with Turkmenistan in March 2017 which will produce significant geopolitical benefits, connecting Uzbekistan with the North-South railway from China through Turkmenistan which will allow Tashkent to open trade corridors with Caspian and Persian Gulf region. Also, relations with Kazakhstan have been improved while Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have recently discussed to reintegrate their respective national electricity systems.

The Central Asian Foreign Ministers which attended the event recognized the importance of strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation on the rational and complex use of water and energy resources in Central Asia taking into account the interests of all regional states. The proposed initiative on holding consultative meetings of the Heads of Central Asian states could be the privileged forum to preserve regular open dialogue and to develop mutually approaches on contemporary regional issues.

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